

just called to say I love you

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by [orphan_account](#)

Summary

Yoongi isn't like Jeongguk's brother's other alpha friends and Jeongguk is secretly sort of really in love with him.

Chapter 1

Jeongguk doesn't particularly like his brother's friends.

Jeonghyun is three years older, already in eighth grade, while Jeongguk is still just a kid. An elementary schooler.

All of Jeonghyun's friends are alphas, every last one, like Jeonghyun himself. Jeongguk hasn't presented yet; he's too young, but Jeonghyun's friends make him hope he won't be an alpha too. They're loud, obnoxious, trampling through Jeongguk's home after school and throwing empty soda cans at each other and generally making fools of themselves.

Except for one. Yoongi is different.

Jeongguk likes to observe people, likes to listen to conversations from his favorite spot underneath the living room coffee table. That's where he hides when Jeonghyun's friends come over, taking a blanket and markers with him so he can draw pictures of tigers in spaceships and not worry about being teased by any of the older boys. From this spot, he notices that something is different about Yoongi.

At first Jeongguk wonders why Jeonghyun and his friends hang out with him. Yoongi doesn't chase the other boys around, doesn't scream or provoke fights or make dirty jokes. He is decently good at video games, certainly not the best of the group, and he uses the occasional curse word when driven to it, but that's the extent of his macho.

Jeongguk thinks for a while that Yoongi is the tail-end of the group, clinging to Jeonghyun and his friends for popularity. Sometimes Jeongguk thinks he seems more like a beta than an alpha, wondering if he made an incorrect assumption about his status because of his

friends.

Then one day, Jeongguk changes his mind.

As usual, he's curled up underneath the living room coffee table. Today he's focused on coloring a picture of Spongebob in his coloring book, his tongue sticking slightly out of his mouth as he tries to keep the green marker exactly within the lines of Spongebob's legs. He's only half paying attention to the shouts of Jeonghyun's friends from the kitchen where they're playing League of Legends.

“Hello?” someone says, and Jeongguk looks up to see a pair of bright orange socks entering the living room. He fears for a moment that the person is looking for him before he hears, “Yeah, okay mom. Sure. Just--” and Jeongguk realizes that the person is Yoongi, talking on the phone.

“No, I'll be home for dinner. Yeah, I finished it during lunch. Yes. Hmm?” He's speaking in Korean, like Jeongguk and Jeonghyun do with their mom and dad. Something about that makes Jeongguk feel secure, homey.

Yoongi pauses, and the socks come nearer to the table. Jeongguk has stopped coloring, drawing himself away from the feet, knees curling up to his chest. He feels the tip of his marker press against his cheek and realizes he's accidentally drawn a line on his face.

“Oh. Okay. I'll make time. Sorry, mom. Love you too.”

Jeongguk hears a long sigh as Yoongi hangs up, and he holds his breath as the feet turn to move back to the kitchen.

Then--

“Shit,” Yoongi curses as his phone comes crashing to the carpet, sliding slightly under the table, right next to Jeongguk's face. Jeongguk doesn't breathe.

The orange socks disappear as Yoongi kneels to pick it up, the ripped knees of his jeans dropping into Jeongguk's vision, followed by Yoongi's face.

“Oh,” Yoongi says, pausing as he takes in the sight of Jeongguk curled under a green checkered blanket. “Hi there.”

Jeongguk says nothing, just blinking at Yoongi. He's never seen him up close before—just peeking, from a distance—and somehow he suddenly *gets* it. Yoongi's power isn't in his volume or the nastiness of his threats. It's strength through control, authority innate but so intense that Jeongguk can feel it in his bones just by looking into Yoongi's dark eyes. Yoongi, Jeongguk understands now, is definitely an alpha. He shivers, burrowing further into his blanket, trying to pretend Yoongi's not there.

“Is that Spongebob?” is not the next thing Jeongguk expects to come out of Yoongi's mouth.

Jeongguk peeks out from underneath his blanket a little bit, just enough to gauge if Yoongi is serious. He looks sincere enough, so Jeongguk nods.

Yoongi looks over his coloring page, apparently fascinated. “I love Spongebob. I watch it all the time.”

The idea that someone older and cooler watches the same show he does takes Jeongguk aback. “You do?”

“Sure.” Yoongi gives him a half smile, a little quirk of the left side of his lips. “He looks good in green.”

“I think he gets bored of being the same color,” Jeongguk stammers.

“I bet you're right.” Yoongi draws his head back out from under the table now that he's grabbed his phone. “You're Jeongguk, right?”

Jeongguk nods again, still wide-eyed.

“Nice meeting you,” is all Yoongi says before he stands back up and heads back out of the living room, leaving Jeongguk nervous and tingly, but in a good way. He returns to his picture, deciding to make Patrick green too, because Yoongi says green is good, and Jeongguk thinks he likes Yoongi a lot.

Later, when Jeonghyun's friends have all gone home and Jeongguk's family has eaten dinner and Jeonghyun is doing math homework in the living room while Jeongguk plays tic-tac-toe with his teddy bear Mr. Buttons, Jeongguk decides to mention his important revelation. “Jeonghyun,” he says, pausing in his game.

“Mmm.”

“Yoongi likes Spongebob.”

“Yoongi, like, Yoongi Min? My friend from school?”

“Yes. Yoongi. He likes Spongebob. He's cool.”

Jeonghyun raises his eyebrows at Jeongguk, turning back to his homework. “Okay. That's nice, I guess.”

“I like him,” Jeongguk declares. “Tell me more about him.”

Jeonghyun actually laughs, and Jeongguk is a little offended, but Jeonghyun leans back in his chair. “Let me think,” he says finally. “He's Korean, like us. He plays basketball, too; he's really good. Two of the high schools in town have already scouted him. And Yoongi is really popular; I think the only reason he hangs out with me is because our parents are friends.”

“Our parents are friends?” This is news to Jeongguk.

“Yeah, apparently they knew each other in Korea or something. Before I went to elementary school Yoongi and I had a lot of play dates. He went to a different elementary school, though, so I didn't really see him much after that till we got to sixth grade.”

“Oh.” It dawns on Jeongguk that he had it backwards. Jeonghyun's friends aren't cooler than Yoongi. In fact, Yoongi is almost too cool for Jeonghyun's friends.

“What else?” Jeonghyun muses. “He's very popular with omegas. Pisses us off sometimes, to be honest.”

Jeongguk doesn't care about that. "What's his favorite superhero?" he demands.

"Dunno. You can ask him next time he comes over."

Jeongguk knows he isn't going to do that. Still, as he goes back to his game of tic-tac-toe, he decides that Yoongi is his new favorite person.

Jeongguk observes Yoongi a lot for the next month, listening for his voice among the cacophony and trying to sneak glimpses of him between the legs of the coffee table.

He learns that Yoongi is quiet, saving his words so that the impact is stronger when he does speak. He learns that Yoongi wears what he wants; doesn't let expensive sneakers or fancy phones define his status.

But Jeongguk doesn't talk to him again, because he feels shy. Yoongi is older and cooler. Jeongguk isn't sure that he'll want to talk to his friend's little brother.

For six weeks, Jeongguk successfully avoids Yoongi, until one day it's just Yoongi coming over, and Jeonghyun leaves him in the living room while he runs upstairs for project materials.

Jeongguk is, of course, under the table. Today he's doing math flashcards because if he doesn't get faster at his times tables his teacher says he can't pass fifth grade, and his mom is Not Happy about it. But Jeongguk is not thinking about what five times six is, because Yoongi is crouching next to the table and shimmying underneath to say hello.

“Hi, Jeongguk,” he says, calmly propping his chin up on one hand. “How's it going?”

Jeongguk looks from Yoongi to his flash cards, conflicted. He pauses. “Not good,” he admits.

“Math?” Yoongi asks, reaching for one of the cards. “That sucks.”

“Yes,” Jeongguk says. “Not fun.”

“I'm behind a year in math,” Yoongi tells him. “I'm not very good at it.”

Jeongguk stares. “Really?” If Yoongi isn't good at math, maybe it's okay that he isn't either. Maybe he never has to learn his times tables.

“Yep. But I'm trying my best, so you still have to try your best at multiplication, okay?”

Jeongguk frowns, his eyebrows knitting together. “Yuck. Fine.”

“You'll get it,” Yoongi assures him. “Just keep practicing.”

Jeongguk hears his brother's feet on the stairs, and he knows his time with Yoongi is limited. “Hey,” he blurts. “Who's your favorite Disney princess?”

“Mulan,” Yoongi says without missing a beat, scooting out from under the table. “She's badass.”

Jeongguk watches him disappear into the kitchen to work on the project with Jeonghyun, considering. He decides that he likes Mulan best, too.

And also that he still doesn't feel like learning his times tables.

Jeongguk started middle school a month ago, and he hates it. He hates it so much.

Everyone gossips and uses swear words that they don't understand and tells gross jokes to get reactions. There's so much talk about what this girl is wearing and who that guy is dating and whether he's going to present as an alpha or beta.

Jeongguk has a few friends that he sits with at lunch, but he isn't that close with them. He's mostly quiet, which seems to suit them. They like to discuss who's going to be an alpha or beta or omega but Jeongguk honestly doesn't care because it doesn't really matter, does it? He's okay with whatever he is.

All in all, everything is too complicated now and Jeongguk kind of wants to be ten all over again.

Jeonghyun and his friends are high schoolers this year, which makes them all the more cool. He doesn't see Yoongi around as much because Yoongi is on the varsity basketball team and a private league as well (he knows this because he heard his mother talking about it with Jeonghyun). They stay mostly the same, playing video games and eating junk food together, but sometimes they study together too now because, as Jeonghyun says, "grades matter in high school."

"Hey," Jeonghyun says one Friday afternoon when Jeongguk is curled up on the couch watching One Piece on the tablet. "Wanna go to a basketball game with me?"

Jeongguk looks up, surprised. "Tonight?"

"Yeah. It's a school game. Yoongi's playing."

"Yes," Jeongguk says, excited. "I want to see him play."

Jeonghyun laughs, ruffling his hair. "Is he my friend or yours? Sometimes I wonder."

“He doesn't know me that well,” Jeongguk points out, his lower lip jutting out. “I'm just like... a fan.”

“True. You're Yoongi's biggest fanboy.”

Jeongguk shifts, stretching. “Will you buy me popcorn at the game? Please?”

“If dad will lend me money,” Jeonghyun shrugs. “I'm broke.”

Watching Yoongi play basketball is just about the coolest thing Jeongguk has ever seen. It's actually sort of surprising, how good Yoongi is, because most of the boys on both teams are several inches taller than he is, not to mention years older. But Yoongi is fast and agile, and his aim is amazing. He lands two three point shots during the game, and Jeongguk is enthralled.

“Yoongi. Is. So. Cool.” Jeongguk tells Jeonghyun excitedly, but Jeonghyun is not really paying that much attention, because they're sitting with some beta girl named Bomi and Jeonghyun is busy trying to flirt.

“Your brother is adorable,” Bomi giggles, reaching out to pat his hair. Jeongguk doesn't like that, flinching away. “Has he presented yet?”

“No,” Jeonghyun replies. “You should say hi, Jeongguk!”

“Hi,” Jeongguk says flatly. He doesn't take his eyes off of the court.

“Do you like basketball?” Bomi is practically cooing.

“I like Yoongi,” Jeongguk says honestly.

“What?” Bomi laughs. “Yoongi Min?”

“He's a fan.” Jeonghyun tweaks Jeongguk's ear. “Yoongi is basically his idol.”

Jeongguk wishes that they would stop talking about him as if he isn't there and let him watch in peace. He's been wondering why Jeonghyun offered to take him out to do something when he rarely spends time with Jeongguk, but by now he's figured out that he's been looped into playing the “cute younger brother” to attract attention.

The game is finishing up, and Jeongguk watches their school take the win, standing up to cheer with the rest of the students in the bleachers. His eyes are on Yoongi as his teammates clap him on the back. Yoongi makes his way to the benches, uncapping his water bottle and scanning the crowd.

When he looks in Jeongguk's direction, Jeongguk ventures a tiny wave, hoping that maybe Yoongi will see it. To his delight, Yoongi waves back, shooting him a thumbs up.

“Is he okay?” Bomi asks when she notices Jeongguk with his face buried in his hands.

“I think he's starstruck,” Jeonghyun says.

It's Jeongguk's first day of high school, and he's not lost, but he's struggling with his locker.

He had lockers in middle school, of course, but the ones in middle school had little latches to push up once the combination was put in, and these ones don't. Jeonghyun said something about pushing it in but it doesn't make sense. After orientation Jeongguk made the mistake of putting his textbooks in the locker (with his brother's help), and now he needs one for biology first hour, and he's running out of time.

It doesn't help that he's been given a locker that's at the very end of the school near the athletic wing. He's so frustrated and worried that he sort of wants to cry, but he's not going to because he's in the middle of a high school hallway.

“Jeongguk Jeon?” someone says from behind him, and Jeongguk isn't sure who he expects to find behind him, but it certainly isn't Yoongi Min.

He hasn't seen Yoongi in a long time. It's not like Yoongi and Jeonghyun fought or anything, they just, as Jeonghyun said, “ran in different circles.” Yoongi hadn't been over to Jeongguk's house since Jeongguk was in sixth grade. To be honest, he's surprised Yoongi recognizes him.

“Hi,” Jeongguk says awkwardly, shuffling his feet because *how embarrassing?* Yoongi most likely remembers him as a ten-year-old worshiper.

“I forgot you were starting high school this year,” Yoongi says. He's damp, hair sticking to his forehead like he just showered, holding a backpack on his back and a sports bag in his hands. He must have come from morning practice.

“Yeah,” Jeongguk says, edging towards his locker, because he still needs to get his textbook and get to his class on time.

“Oh,” Yoongi says, looking from the folded schedule in Jeongguk's hands to the lockers. “Are you having trouble with the lockers? They're a bitch to open. I haven't used mine since I was a freshman.” Jeongguk just stares as Yoongi takes the paper from his hands, scanning it for his combination, and gently moving him aside so that he can open Jeongguk's locker for him.

“You gotta press in hard when you get to the last number—like this—then sort of twist it and pull out to open it. Here,” Yoongi says, and Jeongguk almost can't believe his eyes when it clicks open. Yoongi is

his actual savior.

“Thanks,” Jeongguk sort of stammers, grabbing his biology book (and his math book for good measure, because he is not opening that locker again if he can help it). “You’re kind of a lifesaver.”

“No problem. Take care of yourself, yeah?” Yoongi says, patting him on the back before setting off down the hall.

Jeongguk stares after him until he remembers that he has a class to get to and takes off toward the nearest stairwell.

Relationship talk is nothing new; Jeongguk's classmates have been talking about presentation and mating since middle school. It's different now, though, because all of a sudden everyone is presenting.

Alphas tend to present earlier than the others, most going into their first rut by thirteen. Generally, omegas are next, the majority presenting by fifteen. Betas have the largest range; some mature as early as twelve and others don't present until their early twenties. With betas it isn't as obvious, either; instead of a rut or heat to mark their maturity, they experience a subtle shift in pheromones. It's not always easy to detect without a test.

Nevertheless, most people present by the end of their sophomore year of high school. This is why the gossip changes as Jeongguk goes from 9th to 10th grade from simple “who's dating who” to talk of heats and ruts and mating and sex.

To tell the truth, Jeongguk is a little scandalized. He shows no signs of presenting yet, and he's beginning to suspect that he'll be a beta, which is fine with him. He isn't interested in dating; he just wants to finish school.

Jeonghyun graduates from high school and is accepted to an engineering school across the country. Jeongguk isn't torn, exactly—he and Jeonghyun weren't close though they got along—but it feels strange once he moves out. The house feels weirdly empty without him. It's one of the many shifts in Jeongguk's life that he isn't sure how to handle.

Jeongguk doesn't think about Yoongi Min anymore. He knows where he goes to school, because everyone does. Even when Jeongguk was a freshman everyone in his grade knew his name because Yoongi was the hot captain of the basketball team and half the school was in love with him. He had a bit of a reputation as a player, too, but somehow not as an asshole—though he dated several omegas and betas, each relationship dissolved peacefully.

But Jeongguk doesn't know this because he cares. He knows because the whole school talked about it, just like he knows that Yoongi was recruited by the prestigious university their hometown is situated around. He's going for basketball, of course. It's common knowledge.

In his most private moments, when he's falling asleep at night, or when he's lost in thought on a lazy Sunday afternoon, Jeongguk thinks that if he met someone else like Yoongi, that might be his type. Someone patient, an alpha who doesn't throw his or her masculinity

around like a trophy. Someone genuine. Hypothetically, of course, because Jeongguk kind of doubts that anyone else like Yoongi really exists.

All around him his peers buzz about careers and mates and life decisions, but Jeongguk doesn't really have an answer for any of that. He doesn't have a dream. All he knows is that he likes drawing and watching TV and playing soccer with his friends on Saturday afternoons.

It's a Saturday and Jeongguk is out with friends. They've been to see a movie in the theater downtown and now they're heading to get ice cream. Their whole group is walking down the street when Jeongguk's friend Jennie stops them in front of a sports shop.

"I forgot I need to buy new shin guards," she says, and she's an alpha; it's hard to refuse. They file into the shop.

Jeongguk busies himself looking at all the colors of baseball caps available; he's about to try on a red one when another friend, James, sidles up, nudging him in the side. "Look," he hisses. "It's Yoongi Min."

What?

Jeongguk turns slowly, peeking around a stand full of shoelaces to look at the counter where James is pointing. It's true. Yoongi is the employee at work, currently scanning a basketball for one of the customers. His brows scrunch up as he punches something into the register and he looks handsome, so handsome that Jeongguk kind of wants to melt into the floor. Jeongguk hates that he's noticing but he *can't stop looking*.

It makes sense that Yoongi is here—after all, they aren't far from campus, and college is expensive—but Jeongguk feels breathless and shocked all the same.

“I can't believe it's really him!” James gushes, but Jeongguk can't think of anything but getting out of here.

“We should go,” he says. It's like his friend doesn't hear him, because he's pulling him toward the rest of their group who are waiting in line, exclaiming something about getting a chance to talk to him.

Jeongguk tries his best to hide behind Jennie, and he thinks he does a pretty good job all the way up to the register. He's starting to think he's going to make it out of the store without being noticed, and then--

“Jeongguk?”

Jeongguk's body seizes up, trying to make itself smaller, but Jennie betrays him, dragging him out from behind her with a questioning look.

“Is that you?” Yoongi asks, raising his eyebrows. He looks Jeongguk over, surprised. “Wow. You grew up fast.”

“Hi,” Jeongguk manages, kind of overwhelmed. Yoongi is so handsome. He thinks he might actually vaporize.

“How's school?” Yoongi says, scanning Jennie's shin guards.
“Surviving your junior year?”

“Yeah it's... it's good. Just, you know, SATs and stuff,” Jeongguk says, somehow maintaining a straight face.

Yoongi nods, bagging the items and handing the parcel to his friends.
“Good you see you, Jeongguk.”

“You too,” Jeongguk chokes out, and then his friends are rushing him out of the store, demanding an explanation for how Jeongguk knows Yoongi.

“Oh my god. He's hotter in real life,” one of Jeongguk's friends gushes, tugging on Jeongguk's sleeve. “How could you not tell us that you're friends?”

“We're not,” Jeongguk insists, flustered. “He's just my brother's friend. He barely knows me.”

His friends press further, but when they learn that there's no more to the story, they eventually give up, continuing on their way to get ice cream as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened.

Jeongguk is shaken, and he doesn't know why. He doesn't know when Yoongi started being so good-looking or why the sight of him has

tremors running down the backs of his knees. He doesn't know why it feels bad to say that Yoongi is just his sibling's friend.

He's so confused.

Jeongguk is lying underneath the coffee table on a Thursday evening, writing a paper. He doesn't do it all the time anymore, just every once in a while. It's comforting because it's a remnant of his childhood, even if he doesn't completely fit.

His mother is cooking dinner in the kitchen and his dad is still at work. It's almost like a normal family dinnertime, except that Jeonghyun isn't there.

Jeongguk is staring at his screen trying desperately to think of *anything* interesting to write about *Wuthering Heights* when the front door bursts open.

His head snaps up to attention because that is definitely not how his dad enters the house. And Jeongguk is right, because the person who walks into their living room after a long moment isn't his dad.

It's Yoongi Min.

Jeongguk's mind temporarily freezes.

“Hello?” Jeongguk's mother calls, wiping her hands on a towel as she walks into the room. “Oh—Yoongi. What a surprise?” She shoots Jeongguk a look that says she's as clueless as he is.

Jeongguk flushes for a moment, embarrassed that he's still hiding underneath the table like a child, but when he glances at Yoongi again he realizes that Yoongi is in no state to notice something like that. His eyes look red, like he's been crying.

Tentatively, Jeongguk pushes his laptop aside, crawling out from underneath the table and standing. He can feel Yoongi's eyes trained on him, and he meets Yoongi's gaze, trying to understand the situation.

“My parents are moving back to Korea,” Yoongi says softly.

What? Yoongi can't go to Korea. He's in school. He plays *basketball*, he might go professional—

“I'm not going with them,” Yoongi adds after a long moment.

Oh.

Jeongguk bites his lip shyly. “Maybe...” he pauses. Starts again. “Would you like to come to my room and talk about it?”

“Please,” Yoongi says.

Jeongguk glances at his mother. “Can Yoongi stay for dinner?”

“Of course.” She looks a little worried, but Jeongguk knows she trusts him. “Run along, you two.”

Jeongguk's heart is beating fast as Yoongi follows him up the stairs to his room. It's so sudden, and Jeongguk doesn't know what to make of all of it. Why did Yoongi come here—to *him*—to talk about it?

They reach his room. Jeongguk perches on the edge of his bed, and Yoongi sinks into his desk chair. It's quiet for a minute, but not tense.

“Thanks,” Yoongi says after a time. “I knew I could count on you.”

“Why?” Jeongguk says.

“There's something special about you.” Yoongi runs his fingers through his hair. “You like to listen. You're not scared of silence, like most people. You're content to just *be*.”

It feels eerily like praise, and Jeongguk is ashamed at the way he automatically responds to it, warmth flooding his stomach. “I'm glad you're not leaving,” he says before he can stop himself.

“You are?”

“Yeah.” Jeongguk meets his eyes, and there it is—that dark, unreadable look that is so inexplicably Yoongi.

“God. It's just... things are so hard.” Yoongi sighs in frustration. “I'm working really hard, even with my scholarship, to pay tuition, and I was living at home, but it's just not enough. And now my parents are leaving and I can't afford room and board. And...” Yoongi hesitates, but Jeongguk waits patiently, knowing he'll say it eventually. “Jeongguk, I don't want to play basketball anymore.”

That does surprise Jeongguk. He tilts his head, taken aback. “You're quitting?”

“I don't know. I want to. I mean, I love playing, it's my life. But at the same time... it's become my life, and I don't want to only play basketball for the next ten years.”

This is serious, Jeongguk knows, and yet he can't help but glow at knowing that Yoongi chose *him* of all people to confide in. “What do you want to do, then?”

“Music,” Yoongi admits. “I want to study music production. I don't have time right now when I'm just taking the half-assed courses they serve us between practices.”

Jeongguk takes it all in, nodding. He has an idea, just a seed, and he can't say it yet, but it's growing. For now, he looks at Yoongi, how beaten down he seems; totally exhausted.

A kind of instinct guides him—like a pleasant pull in his gut—and he slides off the bed, moving closer and closer to Yoongi until he's

leaning against the older boy's legs, his hair resting against the side of his knees.

“Jeongguk?” Yoongi asks, staring at him.

“Just... thought you might want a hug,” Jeongguk murmurs, wrapping his arms around Yoongi's legs.

It takes Yoongi a moment, but he eventually smiles, wide and happy, reaching down to pet Jeongguk's hair.

“Hello?” Yoongi's voice says on the other end of the phone, and Jeongguk smiles.

“Hi Yoongi. It's Jeongguk.”

“Hey, kid. What's up?”

“Yoongi, you can live with us,” Jeongguk rushes out, joyful.

“What?”

“You can live with my family, once your family moves. I talked to my parents about it and they said it's okay! Jeonghyun's room is empty anyway, and he's okay with you using it.”

“Whoa.” Yoongi says, and Jeongguk can almost picture his expression—excited, confused, unsure how to respond. “That's... whoa.”

“You'll do it, right?” Jeongguk's voice is hopeful. “You can quit basketball and study what you want. Please. We'd love to have you.”

“That's a big offer,” Yoongi says, and Jeongguk can hear the hesitation, but he knows that Yoongi will accept. “I hate to accept but... I don't know what else to do.”

“Don't,” Jeongguk says quietly.

“I'm sorry?”

“Don't hate accepting it. I want you around,” Jeongguk says, and immediately regrets it. “Nevermind. You're invited for dinner tomorrow. Be there at seven.” He hangs up as fast as he can.

Jeongguk is so, so happy. Yoongi is moving in next week. He's quit basketball, and Jeongguk is really proud, because he knows how difficult it was, how Yoongi felt that he was letting his team and his parents down. How he's afraid of being a washed-up quitter, giving up possible stardom only to fail. Jeongguk knows all of this and he thinks that Yoongi is so strong and amazing for pursuing his dream.

Yoongi's going to go to school part time for music, so that he can pay tuition. It might take him a lot of years, but he's going to do it. He's going to work hard and Jeongguk *knows* he's going to be fantastic.

Junior year is winding down well. Jeongguk got a decent score on both the SAT and his ACT, and summer break is closing in. Jeonghyun, too, will be coming back home for a while between his extra spring semester and summer internship.

Everything is wonderful.

Then one day, Jeongguk wakes up in his bed, hot and painful. His mother finds him, takes one look at him, and takes him straight to the hospital.

Jeongguk is in heat.

They give him a suppressant shot, which is painful and terrible but doesn't last long, and after a few hours his heat calms down. They prescribe him regular suppressants to get rid of his heats and dial back his pheromones. All he's left with is the strange new understanding that he's an omega.

It's not that being an omega bothers him, exactly. It's more that it's unexpected. Jeongguk had gotten so used to the idea of himself as a beta that he's not sure what to do with the new information. Combined with the experience of his heat it all feels oddly... sexual.

But after things settle down and he's had an awkward talk with his mother, things go mostly back to normal. Jeongguk finds that he keeps being the way he's always been; shy, observant, affectionate. He's maybe a little more touchy than before, but that can be chalked up to teenage hormones as much as anything else.

Two days later, Yoongi moves in.

Jeongguk is in his room studying for his math exam when he arrives; he doesn't even know Yoongi is in the house until he knocks at Jeongguk's doorframe.

“Hey. Can I come in?”

“Sure,” Jeongguk replies, glancing up from a problem. “Welcome home.”

Something odd flashes across his expression at that—like he's overwhelmed. It passes quickly. “What are you up to?” He crosses the room to look over Jeongguk's shoulder.

“Did you pass Algebra II?”

“Barely,” Yoongi chuckles. “I can't help mu--” he stops, freezing as he leans over Jeongguk's homework.

A few seconds pass, and then it starts to feel awkward. "Yoongi?" Jeongguk ventures, looking up at him with concern.

Yoongi's face looks drawn, tight. He blinks. "Jeongguk, you..." he says, but his voice is lower than usual. It makes Jeongguk swallow, hard.

"Yeah?"

"You smell like... like omega." Yoongi stares hard at his face; the way that he's looking at him makes Jeongguk feel weirdly exposed.

"Right," Jeongguk says, scrambling. "I guess no one told you yet. I, um. Presented."

"I can tell," Yoongi murmurs. He steps away from Jeongguk slightly, and Jeongguk is surprised by how *horrible* that feels, like he's repulsed Yoongi.

"Is that a bad thing? Sorry--" Jeongguk says, blinking. He feels burning behind his eyes, as if he's going to get teary, which is so stupid because that's such an overreaction--

"No!" Yoongi says. He reaches out to pat Jeongguk on the back, albeit a little tensely, but it makes Jeongguk feel better. "You're fine. I just thought you were going to be a beta. Caught me by surprise a bit."

"I thought so, too," Jeongguk admits. "I'm not exactly omega material."

Frowning, Yoongi hops up on Jeongguk's desk. "What makes you say that?"

"I dunno." Jeongguk is a little embarrassed. "Omegas are supposed to be like... sweet. Pretty. I mean, they don't have to be, obviously. But it's... like... desirable." He's usually better articulated than this, but somehow this topic makes him feel shy. "I'm not really... attractive as an omega. But that's okay."

"It would be okay if it were true." Yoongi raises his eyebrows at him. "But it's not."

Jeongguk glances at Yoongi, then back at his homework. "You don't have to flatter me just because you're staying in my house, you know."

"I'm not," Yoongi says flatly. "Look, kid, you know I don't talk more than I have to. Why would I waste words on things I don't mean? You're pretty and you make a fantastic omega. Better yet, you're an awesome person."

Jeongguk tries—and probably fails—to hide how sweet the praise feels. "Well, thanks, I guess."

There's another pause, strangely uncomfortable, before Yoongi taps his fingers on Jeongguk's review assignment. "If you finish this I'll take you out for ice cream."

"I'm never going to finish it, though. It's so hard."

“Hmm. Better get started, then.”

“He's like... my brother. But nicer,” Jeongguk tells Jennie when she finds out about living with Yoongi and presses him for details. “I don't see him that much, though. He's busy earning tuition.”

“But isn't it different now?” Jennie cocks her head at him. “I mean, since you're an omega.”

Jeongguk splutters. “It's not like that! And besides, it doesn't make any difference. *You're* an alpha,” he points out.

Jennie shrugs. “Sure, which means I can smell you all the time. I have a boyfriend, but if he hasn't got one, I bet he's thinking about how you smell *all the time*. He's probably barely controlling himself. That's how alphas are around omegas, Jeongguk.”

Jeongguk thinks faintly that he never wants to date an alpha like that. “You've got it wrong,” he insists. “Yoongi isn't interested in the slightest.”

Jennie shrugs. “Fine, maybe. But remember that you presented really

late and your pheromones are stronger than most. I think you're just oblivious.”

When he goes home that night, Jeongguk can't stop thinking about their conversation. Obviously he knows Yoongi can smell his status, but he doesn't think the other boy has any reaction to it. They're like brothers.

Except that Jeongguk can smell Yoongi's alpha smell—not too strong, because Yoongi cleans up after himself, but every once in a while. It lingers in the shower at times, or drifts out of Yoongi's borrowed room when he leaves the door open.

And he likes it. He likes it a lot. When he smells it he kind of wants to go bury himself in Yoongi's blankets.

Part of him—the part he only lets breathe late at night, when he's alone—wishes very, very quietly that Yoongi would feel the same way about how he smells. It wants him to like Jeongguk back.

It's not a crush, because Jeongguk doesn't let it be. But it could be.

It's midsummer, a dark, warm evening. Jeonghyun visited the week before, meaning that Yoongi slept on the sofa, but he's off to his internship now and it's back to Yoongi and Jeongguk.

Jeongguk is reading a graphic novel, sitting on the floor with his back against the couch and his legs tucked underneath the coffee table. He's not underneath it, because that feels silly, but it's comforting.

He doesn't notice Yoongi looking at him until he glances up to look at the clock.

Yoongi licks his lips subconsciously, fingers hovering over the keyboard of his laptop. "I never realized why you liked the table before."

"Huh?"

"The coffee table. You always used to cuddle up underneath. Still do, kind of. It's cute."

Jeongguk fights back a hot flush. "Oh. Why?"

"I think it's omega behavior. Nesting. Just never occurred to me before."

Nesting. Jeongguk feels odd—vulnerable—knowing Yoongi notices so much about him so casually. "It made me feel safe," Jeongguk says, wondering if that's weird.

Yoongi chuckles. "See? Adorable. You're doing it right now, too. Nesting."

Is he? It's warm out, so Jeongguk is wearing shorts and a t-shirt and no blanket, but he has on soft socks and he's piled some of the throw pillows from the couch around him for comfort. "It's not weird, is it?"

"Nah. I always thought nesting was sweet." Yoongi quirks up the corner of his mouth at him. "Are you busy?"

"Not really." Jeongguk closes his novel, setting it on the table.

"Want to go see a movie together?"

The two of them pile into Yoongi's car and he takes them to the movie theater. Yoongi picks out some bad action movie, but that's exactly what Jeongguk likes. He buys popcorn and lets Jeongguk shake as much cheesy powder into it as he wants.

The movie is crappy, as expected, but there are a couple of one-liners that have Jeongguk snickering. Yoongi's snarky criticism as they leave the theater is perhaps funnier than the actual movie.

"I don't feel like heading back yet," Yoongi says suddenly when they reach the car.

So they stop by a fast food place and buy Oreo flurries and then Yoongi drives them to a park. He takes a blanket from his trunk and they have a midnight picnic of ice cream underneath the stars. Normally Jeongguk would feel nervous to be out in the dark at this time, but he's not with Yoongi, because he knows that he's always safe

around the older boy.

When the ice cream is gone they lay back on the blanket. It's quiet; Jeongguk can hear crickets chirping in the bushes but everything else is soft, calm.

“Are you happy?” Jeongguk asks Yoongi suddenly, turning his head to look at the older boy. “Now that you've quit basketball and tried something new?”

Yoongi makes an odd rumbling sound—low and content. It's an alpha noise. “I'm happier right now than I've been in years,” he says.

Jeongguk grins. “I'm glad.”

“What about you? Are you happy?”

“So happy,” Jeongguk admits. “I like hanging out with you.”

“Yeah, well, you're not so bad yourself, Jeongguk.”

“Thanks.” Jeongguk clears his throat. He can smell Yoongi at this distance; he smells nice. His alpha scent is comforting. “Yoongi?”

“Yeah?”

“Do you ever...” Jeongguk chickens out. “Nevermind.”

“Ever what?”

Jeongguk swallows. “Um. Think about mating.”

“Mating? Sure. Why, is it on your mind?”

“Kind of? Not really. Forget I asked.”

Jeongguk can hear shuffling next to him. “I guess I've thought about it some. I don't really have a set time frame. The person is the most important part.”

“Mm.” Jeongguk fiddles with the hem of his shorts.

“Do you have someone you're interested in? Or a type?”

“No,” Jeongguk says. “No one specific. Just... you know.”

“Do you like beta or alphas? Or both?”

“Both,” Jeongguk says. “But... maybe... maybe alphas, more?”

“Really?” Yoongi turns towards him, and Jeongguk can make out the surprise on his face even in the darkness. “I pegged you as being interested in betas.”

“Why?”

“You're sort of... calm. Gentle. You avoid conflict. I guess I thought that alphas are too hot-headed to be your type.”

“When you put it that way, it sounds right,” Jeongguk admits. “But I like the way alphas smell. It's... strong. Comforting.”

“Oh?”

Jeongguk is thankful that his blush is invisible in the dark. “Besides, not all alphas are hot-headed. You're not.”

Yoongi doesn't say anything to that, and Jeongguk wonders if he's said something wrong. But Yoongi just sits up after a moment, gathering their empty cups. “It's getting late. We should get back before your mom starts worrying.”

Jeongguk folds the blanket, following Yoongi back to the car. He pauses before he gets in, looking over at Yoongi. “Thanks for tonight,” he says. He feels shy, like he's on a date. “It was fun.”

“Me too.” Yoongi smiles slightly at him, opening the door to the drivers side and slipping behind the wheel.

“I have news,” Yoongi says from Jeongguk's doorway. It's evening in late August; Yoongi has been at work all day and must have just gotten back. “I got a promotion!”

“Congratulations!” Jeongguk swivels his chair around to look at him with real excitement. “That's awesome!”

“I'm a manager now,” Yoongi says, flashing his new name tag. “And I get paid a lot more.”

Jeongguk is so proud. His eyes crinkle up with the force of his smile. “I knew you'd get it,” he says.

“I was hoping I would.” Yoongi crosses the room, hopping up to perch on Jeongguk's desk like he always does. “You know what this means? I can afford my own place starting in the fall! I've got it picked out and everything.”

Jeongguk blinks. His face falls as he processes the information. “Wait. You're leaving?”

“Well, yeah. I can't leech off of your parents forever.”

“It's not leeching,” Jeongguk insists. “You can stay.”

"I'm almost twenty-one," Yoongi points out. "I need to have independence at some point. Damn it, Jeongguk, don't look so sad. Aren't you happy for me?"

"Yes," Jeongguk replies, forcing himself to control his expression. "I am happy. Just... I'll miss you."

"I won't be far," Yoongi says. "We'll keep in contact."

"Right." Jeongguk swallows hard.

They don't keep in touch.

It's Jeongguk's fault, not Yoongi's. At first Yoongi texts him at least twice a week, asking him how his senior year is going and sending him funny pictures.

Jeongguk only replies about half the time, slower and slower each passing week. Yoongi eventually stops texting him.

He thought that maybe Yoongi would drop by for dinner once in a while, but he doesn't. Jeongguk tells himself it's a good thing.

He needs to let go, because he knows he's in love with Yoongi. He wants to be there when Yoongi has bad days and wash his socks when he runs out of time and make him coffee when he's kept up by homework assignments. He wants the alpha to hold him tight and kiss his forehead. He wants Yoongi to *mate* him.

It's not okay. Sometimes over the summer it felt like maybe—maybe something was there, but Jeongguk realizes that he was imagining it, projecting his feelings. He might have even made Yoongi uncomfortable.

Regardless, he needs to give Yoongi space so that he can meet an omega or beta and fall in love and live his life. And Jeongguk needs space to get over him, too.

But Jeongguk finds that getting over a crush that he's been developing for six years is harder than he thinks.

“You're nearly eighteen and you've never dated,” James exclaims around Christmas time. “I've never even heard you talk about anyone.”

That's because there's only ever been one, Jeongguk thinks and doesn't say. Instead he says, “I'm not interested in dating.”

“I think Minji's been interested all year.” James pokes him in the side. “Or she would be, if you'd give her a chance. She's a hot alpha! What more do you want?”

“I want to concentrate on getting into college and passing math.” Jeongguk scoots away from him. “That’s more important.”

Jeongguk gets accepted to the university in town, and he decides to attend because in state tuition is cheap. He doesn’t know yet what he wants to major in but it’s definitely not math.

Senior year seems to pass like a blur. It feels like only weeks have passed before he’s walking across the stage in his cap and robe to accept his high school diploma.

Jeongguk’s mom had suggested that he invite Yoongi to his graduation, but Jeongguk had refused. “He’s busy,” he told her. “I’ll see him around sometime, anyway.”

Spring melts into summer. Jeongguk turns in his enrollment deposit and fills out lots of paperwork. He gets a summer job working at an ice cream shop, which is kind of a drag but could be worse. He finishes orientation, applies for a couple scholarships, goes dorm-shopping.

He sees Yoongi once in August, when he’s biking home from work. The older boy is jogging in the park, headphones in and detached from the world. Jeongguk pauses to watch, half-hidden behind a tree. He doesn’t wave or call out, just watches him disappear behind the playground.

Jeongguk goes home and curls up in bed with his lights off and his shades drawn. He cries into his pillow—just a little, quietly—because he knows it’s still the same. His feelings aren’t going to change.

It’s always going to be Yoongi.

Jeongguk gets along well with his roommate Taehyung. He's a year older, because he took a gap year to travel, but he fits in just fine with the other freshmen. Taehyung is also an omega, and he's good for Jeongguk, really, because he's full of energy and laughter and is as weird as Jeongguk himself. He makes sure that Jeongguk goes out—drags him out of the dorm to try new restaurants and go ice skating and sing karaoke—but he also likes anime and Spongebob and all the other dumb shit that Jeongguk enjoys.

This term, Jeongguk is knocking out general reqs, so he spends most of his time in the science and English buildings. He never goes anywhere near the eastern side of campus, where the music school is. That might be why he doesn't run into Yoongi at all.

Jeongguk thinks that he does a decent job of taking care of himself. He eats better than most college students do, he isn't quite addicted to coffee, and he sleeps at least seven hours a night. He gets his homework done and he even usually does his laundry before he has to re-wear underwear. At the very least, he's doing a lot better than Taehyung.

He's not great at remembering to take his suppressants.

It's hard because he doesn't remember to bring them to the dining hall

every day when he gets up. Then he has to remember to take them when he returns to his dorm room after class. At first he manages okay because he only has to take them every other day, and he remembers often enough to meet that requirement.

But then a month or two passes, his schoolwork starts to increase, and midterms roll around. By the time he takes his last exam, he's sleep deprived, slightly malnourished, and definitely addicted to coffee.

He wakes up late on Saturday morning. He has a day or two off after exams, and best of all, no more tests to study for. He takes a shower, dresses himself, and makes his way to one of the science buildings to retrieve his textbook, which he'd left in his professor's office when he attended office hours the week before.

He's about halfway there when he notices that he feels weird. Oddly sweaty, even though it's October and pretty chilly out.

His knees feel wobbly, too, kind of jelly-like, as though they might give out on him. Jeongguk wonders if he's caught something in the last week, or if he's driven himself to illness by taking crap care of himself.

It isn't till people's heads start to turn as he passes that it occurs to Jeongguk.

He hasn't taken his suppressants all week.

Oh. *Oh.*

He's going into heat.

Jeongguk breaks into a run, thinking fast. It's too far to go back to the dorm; he's not sure he'll make it. His best bet is to try and make it to a bathroom in the science building, which is what he does.

By the time he's made it and locked himself in a stall, he's really feeling the effects of the heat. Thankfully, the bathroom is deserted. Jeongguk isn't entirely sure what to do with himself; he's never experienced a full heat unless he counts the one that they shut down at the hospital.

God, he's so stupid. Jeongguk hides his face in his hands, surprised to find himself teary. This would never have happened if he'd been more responsible. It's all his fault.

He knows that he should call his mom, have her pick him up and take him to the hospital. He pulls out his phone, forces himself to open his contacts.

His fingers hover over *Mom*, but his eyes shift to the contact above: *Min, Yoongi*.

Oh, no. He cannot. Jeongguk cannot let himself do this.

But he just... wants, so much. He's never wanted anything so much in his life as he wants to call Yoongi in this moment. It's like his body is singing for the alpha, and Jeongguk wants to cry because he's drowning in a wave of love and want and *need*.

He barely knows what he's doing as he hits *Call*.

Chapter 2

Yoongi answers on the fifth ring, a hint of surprise in his voice. “Jeongguk?” There's shuffling on the other end. Yoongi's voice sounds gravelly, rough, and Jeongguk thinks he might have woken him up.

“Hi,” Jeongguk says, trying not to snifle.

There's a long silence, and Jeongguk can tell Yoongi doesn't know what to say. He must be surprised; they haven't talked in almost a year. “What's going on?”

“Um.” Jeongguk's voice cracks. He doesn't quite know how to explain the situation; he can't just say, *I'm in heat*, can he?

“Are you okay?” Jeongguk can hear Yoongi going on alert. “Are you crying?”

“Yoongi, I'm... I need help.”

“Where are you?” Yoongi asks, voice even but firm. He's so calm, he's always calm, and Jeongguk can't help but sob because he just *loves Yoongi so much*. “Are you hurt?”

“No,” Jeongguk says, squeezing his legs together because he's starting to feel wetness in his boxers. “I'm in the s-science building. The first floor bathroom.”

“Good, I'm close by. I'll be there in ten.” Yoongi ends the call, and

Jeongguk hangs his head. He's so stupid. What is he thinking, putting Yoongi through this? What if Yoongi has a partner, and this causes an issue? What if Yoongi thinks it's disgusting?

By the time he hears the door to the bathroom banging open, Jeongguk is a mess of tears and snot.

“Jeongguk?”

It's Yoongi's voice. Nervously, Jeongguk stands, unlatching the door to the stall and peeking out.

Yoongi is every bit as handsome as he was the last time Jeongguk saw him. Maybe more, now, because he's obviously rushed here, his dark hair sticking up in places and his shirt tucked haphazardly into the left side of his jeans. Only one of his shoes is tied.

He looks so worried, incredibly strained, and Jeongguk is hit by a wave of guilt because it's all his fault. He's such an inconvenience. Stressed, Jeongguk makes a choked sound that has Yoongi rushing over.

“Fuck,” he says, steadying Jeongguk (had he slipped? he hadn't noticed?). “You're in heat.”

“Yeah,” Jeongguk manages. Yoongi smells *so so so so* good. How did he forget how much he loves Yoongi's scent? He smells warm, soft, safe. Yoongi feels like home in a way that no one else does, and Jeongguk wants to bury his face in Yoongi's neck and wrap his arms around him and just be held until it's all over.

"I gotta get you home," Yoongi says, a little breathless. "Let me take you to your mom."

Jeongguk immediately bursts into tears, crumpling to the floor. "No, no, *no...*" he cries. He knows he's being dramatic, irritating, but he doesn't want Yoongi to drop him off. He doesn't want him to leave. His shoulders shake, but he can't stop crying.

"Sweetheart, I've got to get you to the hospital somehow." Yoongi squats in front of him, tilting his chin up gently with the tips of his fingers as though he's afraid to hurt him.

Something warm curls in Jeongguk's abdomen at being called *sweetheart* but he can't stop the tears. "I don't want to go to the hospital," he chokes out. "I want *you*." Jeongguk knows he can't have Yoongi but he wants so bad, he has to tell him. He has to at least *try*. "Please, please, *please...*"

Yoongi freezes. His eyes are dark, pupils blown. He licks his lips carefully. "Jeongguk... you're in heat. I can't take you to my house. You're... well..." He scratches at his head, unwilling to say it.

"Please take me home. You can take care of me," Jeongguk begs. "You can touch me." He reaches up for Yoongi, fingers curling into his shirt.

"You know I can't," Yoongi says, teeth gritted. "That's not an option, Jeongguk. I'm not going to sleep with you while you're in heat."

There it is. Rejection.

Jeongguk stops crying with a wet hiccup, falling silent. He wishes he

could sink through the floor, wishes he had never called Yoongi in the first place. He knew that Yoongi didn't want him, knew it wasn't going to happen, but he called because he hadn't managed to beat out that small speck of hope that said *maybe* in the depths of his chest.

“Sorry,” Jeongguk sniffles into the cold silence of the bathroom. “I should have called my mom. I knew you didn't want me, maybe you even have a-a mate already, I shouldn't have confessed like this. I'm sorry, Yoongi. I tried so hard not to be in love with you a-anymore and I couldn't get over you and now I'm making you uncomfortable. I'm so sorry. Just... just call a cab, or something.”

Jeongguk closes his eyes, waits for Yoongi to be angry, waits for him to call for the taxi and get him out of this humiliating situation.

Nothing happens. It's quiet enough that Jeongguk can hear the buzzing of the building's heaters. He can hear Yoongi breathing, abnormally short and shallow.

Slowly, he opens his eyes.

Yoongi licks his lips. He does that often when he's thinking. “Hold on,” he says. He looks conflicted, like there's ten different expressions battling to show on his face. “Are you saying what I think you're saying? You're... you're in love with me?”

“I'm s-sorry,” Jeongguk repeats, drawing into himself. “I've become a burden. I'm s-supposed to just be your friend's little brother.” His head is throbbing, and having Yoongi so close is just making the atmosphere more heady.

“I can't fucking believe this,” Yoongi says. Jeongguk curls in, because oh, god, he's made Yoongi upset. “I spent three fucking years pining

away for you thinking that I had to control my feelings *all the damn time* because I thought, there's no way someone as pretty and sweet and wonderful as Jeongguk Jeon would look twice at *me*! And I kept my distance, and never said anything the whole time, and I was so wrapped up in myself that I didn't even *notice*."

Jeongguk's head is spinning. "You... control yourself... around me?" He feels himself leaking through his pants onto the tile floor.

"The hell do you think I've been doing?" Yoongi says, holding his head in his hands. "I'm a fucking idiot. Fuck. Tell me straight, Jeongguk. Do you like me, really?"

"I think I've been in love with you since we met," Jeongguk blurts. God, he has no filter right now. He'd flush hard if he wasn't burning up already. "Please don't be mad. I'm sorry."

"No, no, I'm not mad, Gguk." Yoongi closes his eyes. "Not at you. I'm pissed at myself for not realizing. Damn it, Jeongguk. You're so..." he laughs as if he's going crazy. "Why did you stop talking to me?"

"Tried... tried to get over you." Jeongguk is slurring a bit, too hot, too close to Yoongi. His fingers creep over to wind into Yoongi's sleeve before he can stop them. "Thought... thought I made you uncomfortable. It didn't work. I still love you." He kind of wants to cry again, feels tears pricking at his eyes. Why is this so awful and painful and complicated?

"Fuck." Yoongi's eyes are fixed on the place where Jeongguk is gripping his sleeve. "Okay. Let me tell you something then." He gently unhooks Jeongguk's fingers from his shirt and finally—*finally*—winds his arms around him, pulling him to his chest. "You are the best person I know, Jeongguk, and I am *so* in love with you. There's no one I would rather spend time with, no one else I want to spend my life

with, okay?"

Jeongguk melts into him, cheek hot against Yoongi's chest. "I love you. Please don't be a dream."

"I'm not." Yoongi strokes his hair hesitantly, as if he's amazed that he's allowed to do so. Jeongguk keens. "If you *really* want, I'll help you through your heat. Is that what you want?" Yoongi pulls back, takes Jeongguk's face between his hands. "You can tell me, baby."

"Yes," Jeongguk says. "Please. Please do."

"And you're not just saying that because you're in heat?"

"Wanted," Jeongguk struggles for words, "Wanted you to mate me since I presented."

Yoongi groans. "Fuck. I'm an idiot. Okay, sweetheart. I'm taking you home."

With Yoongi's help Jeongguk manages to stand, and somehow they maneuver to the parking lot and into Yoongi's car. Jeongguk presses his cheek listlessly against the cold glass of the window. Occasionally he sneaks glances at Yoongi, half in disbelief that this is happening, that Yoongi wants to touch him. That he loves him.

"I thought..." Jeongguk starts. He draws a deep breath. "I thought I wasn't good enough for someone like you."

“You were wrong,” Yoongi says, hands gripped hard around the steering wheel. “I was wrong. God. After that summer, you know, I thought maybe I picked up on something? And I was thinking about asking you to be something more, after I got a better job and could support you. But then you stopped talking to me so I convinced myself that I’d misunderstood.”

Jeongguk forces himself to breathe, because he's feeling dizzy by the second. He's not sure it's helping, because each breath is heavy with Yoongi's pheromones in this small space. “I think... I think we're both dumb.”

“Yeah.” Yoongi glances at him quickly, keeping his eyes mostly on the road, but it's full of something warm. Yoongi's looked at Jeongguk like this before; only now does Jeongguk register that it's affectionate.

He's been so blind.

A thick wave of slick ripples out of Jeongguk, and he grips the edges of his seat. “Yoongi,” he pants, nervous. “C-can I borrow the sweatshirt in your backseat?”

“Sure. Are you cold?”

“N-no,” Jeongguk stammers, reaching for it. “Just. Um. Leaking.”

“Oh.” Jeongguk detects a spike in Yoongi's mood as he settles the fabric underneath himself. He's not sure why he can tell. He just can. He's always been in tune with Yoongi.

It's a short drive to Yoongi's apartment, ten minutes, the same as it

took him to get to Jeongguk in the first place, but it feels long. Jeongguk's heat is setting in, hot and itchy underneath his skin, and he's starting to feel cramps.

“Can you get up the stairs?” Yoongi asks him as he puts the car in park.

Jeongguk swallows. “Yes,” he says, and immediately sways when he stands up.

“Nevermind,” Yoongi chokes, rushing over to catch him. “We’ll take the elevator.”

Yoongi is slightly shorter than Jeongguk, built less wide, but he's stronger than he looks from years of basketball. He can't really carry Jeongguk up to his apartment, but he half-supports him and somehow the two of them make it into the elevator and up to the fifth floor.

“It's not very large,” Yoongi apologizes as he digs his keys out of his pocket, one arm still wrapped around Jeongguk. They jingle as he fits them into the lock. “But it's mine, and no one's going to disturb us.”

“I love you,” Jeongguk whispers, not sure if he's love-drunk or heat-drunk.

The apartment is indeed small. There's only three rooms, a hybrid kitchen/living room, Yoongi's bedroom, and a bathroom. But Jeongguk loves it immediately because ultimately it looks just like Yoongi's apartment should look; simple, with a framed poster of Michael Jordan above the sofa and neutral colored furniture. Everything looks a little worn but it's all neat—Yoongi's never been a messy person—and there are surprisingly quirky things waiting in every corner: a bright orange throw pillow on the sofa, a frog-shaped

jar next to the kitchen sink.

Jeongguk loves Yoongi's taste in everything. He wants nothing more than to have Yoongi hold him and touch him and stay with him forever. He leans into Yoongi and a whine escapes from his mouth, high and needy.

“Shit. Right. Heat.” Yoongi takes Jeongguk into his room and helps him lay down on his bed, amidst the crumpled comforter and sheets. Yoongi really must have come straight from his bed that morning.

Yoongi disappears for a minute, returning with a glass of water and a cool damp cloth. “Drink,” he tells Jeongguk, handing him the water. He wipes the sweat from Jeongguk's forehead as he sips.

“Yoongi,” Jeongguk says after a minute. “I need you to touch me. Please.”

Jeongguk can see his adam's apple bob as he swallows. “Are you sure? I was going to clean you up first.”

“I need you more,” Jeongguk mumbles, awkward. He holds out the water glass, and Yoongi takes it, setting it aside. The alpha looks nervous. It occurs to Jeongguk that he might not have experience in this area.

“Is this your first time?” he asks, worried that he's doing something that Yoongi doesn't want. “W-we could wait. If you don't w-want.” Jeongguk wants him so much but if Yoongi needs him to, he'll go straight to the hospital and get the shot.

“No!” Yoongi shakes his head, collecting himself. “I do want to. And I’m not a virgin, if that’s what you’re asking.”

Jeongguk gulps.

“I’ve never been with an omega during heat, though. And it’s your first time. I just want to be careful.”

“You won’t hurt me,” Jeongguk insists, and he knows it’s true.

“Okay.” Yoongi takes a deep breath. “Let me take care of you then, sweetheart.” He tilts Jeongguk’s face up to his with one hand, leans in, and kisses him, soft, close-lipped and chaste. He pulls back, kisses Jeongguk’s cheek, his chin, his nose, then tilts his head and slots their mouths together again, warm and wet this time, nipping at the swell of Jeongguk’s lower lip.

Jeongguk can’t help the tears that well up in his eyes and trickle down his cheeks. They run into the juncture of their mouths, salty to the taste, and Yoongi pulls back, alarmed. “Jeongguk? What’s wrong?”

Jeongguk is shaking, caught up in little sobs, but he shakes his head, reaching out to hold Yoongi’s hand. “Nothing. Nothing at all. Everything is right. I love you.” He hiccups out the last word. He’s not usually so emotional, and he’d probably be embarrassed if he didn’t feel so *loved*.

Yoongi hugs him hard, lips pressing lightly to his jaw before he leans back up to kiss Jeongguk again and again and again. “Beautiful,” he whispers between kisses. “So sweet.” Kiss. “So attentive, so thoughtful.” Kiss. “My darling boy.”

Jeongguk whimpers against his lips, not sure if he's more affected by Yoongi's words or Yoongi's lips or just his presence alone.

They kiss again, deeper, longer, and Jeongguk forgets how to breathe through his nose so it leaves him gasping and bumping chins with Yoongi as he pulls away.

“Want me to get you out of those clothes?” Yoongi asks, and Jeongguk can only nod, lifting his back and hips when needed so that Yoongi can slip him out of his black sweater and jeans.

Jeongguk's boxers are sticky and dark with slick. He's a complete mess, but there's something about the way that Yoongi's gaze turns intense and heavy that makes Jeongguk think it's not so bad.

“Fuck,” Yoongi says. Jeongguk has never been more aroused in his whole life. “You look so good, sweetheart. Perfect, just for me.”

“For you,” Jeongguk agrees. “Just you.” He's flushed, straining in his underwear, but he's not worried, not desperate, because he knows that Yoongi will give him what he needs. Jeongguk trusts him completely.

Yoongi's hands stroke down his sides, feather-light. He doesn't make Jeongguk wait long before he lowers his hips and *grinds*.

“*Oh*,” Jeongguk stutters out, momentarily overwhelmed. Yoongi rocks against him again, and again, and another sound breaks from his throat, breathy and soft.

“Is it good?” Yoongi asks in his ear, gentle and low. “How do you feel?”

“S-so good,” Jeongguk keens, eyes fluttering shut. The pressure is relentless, and Jeongguk is embarrassed at how quickly he's reaching his peak but he can't do anything more than choke on his own moans as he orgasms for the first time. He's still hot, still unsatisfied, but he worries it must be worse for Yoongi.

“Sorry,” he whispers, glancing up at Yoongi though his eyelashes. Yoongi chuckles, brushing Jeongguk's sweaty bangs out of his eyes.

“You're in heat. You're going to come a lot,” Yoongi tells him.

Jeongguk doesn't know how to reply to that, but he doesn't have to because Yoongi is hooking his fingers into the top of his boxers and easing them off. “Lift your hips, baby,” he says, and Jeongguk lets him pull them down over his feet. Yoongi tosses them to the floor.

“If you don't like anything, tell me. Promise, Jeongguk?”

“Promise,” Jeongguk says.

Yoongi's hand wraps around his cock, stroking, and Jeongguk throws his hand over his mouth because *Jesus*.

“You look gorgeous,” Yoongi says, and Jeongguk's dick twitches in his hand at the praise. “I always thought you would. I'm so lucky to have you, so lucky to see you like this.”

Jeongguk wants to say that he's the lucky one, really, but the words don't come out of his mouth as Yoongi dips his head to lick at the tip.

“Feel good?” Yoongi asks, still calm, controlled.

“Yes,” Jeongguk pants.

He doesn't cover the loud moan that leaves him as Yoongi takes him into his mouth, hot and wet, but he doesn't care anymore. Yoongi bobs, up and down, tongue running over the tip, precise and experienced.

It doesn't take long before Jeongguk is tugging frantically at Yoongi's shirt. “I'm close,” he pants, worried. “You don't have to—to—”

Yoongi doesn't pull off as he comes again, swallowing around Jeongguk's cock till it goes flaccid and Jeongguk's whimpers stutter into quiet pants.

“Y-you didn't have to swallow,” Jeongguk says, shy.

“I wanted to.” Yoongi kisses his hip, fingers closing around Jeongguk's thighs to nudge them apart, spreading his legs with utter gentleness. He presses his lips to the inside of Jeongguk's knee tenderly before slipping his fingers between the cheeks of Jeongguk's ass to rub at his entrance.

Jeongguk sucks in a sharp breath. He's so, so wet; Yoongi's fingers are coated with his slick.

“You have no idea how hot this is,” Yoongi breathes. Jeongguk feels how hard Yoongi is against his leg and he just wants Yoongi to *fuck*

him.

“C-can you... put it in?” Jeongguk licks his lips, meeting Yoongi's eyes uncertainly. “Please?”

“Fuck. Okay. Yes.” Yoongi slips one finger inside of Jeongguk, and it's tight but pleasant. He's so wet that there's little resistance. Jeongguk whines as he moves it in and out, massaging at his walls. He adds another, slowly, and it's not as easy as the first one but it doesn't hurt because Yoongi is impossibly gentle. He spreads them, scissoring, stretching, reaching deeper, until--

“T-there,” Jeongguk gasps, jerking.

“Here?” Yoongi wiggles against that spot, and Jeongguk can't help but whimper and nod, hands twisting into the sheets.

When Yoongi adds a third finger it's harder than the first two, but Yoongi keeps touching that place and stroking Jeongguk's shaft with his other hand, so if it hurts, Jeongguk hardly processes it.

Finally Yoongi pulls his fingers out and wipes them on the sheet. He starts to unbutton his pants. “Are you ready, sweetheart?”

Jeongguk nods, watching Yoongi slide his pants and shirt off and pull his boxers down. “H-how can I make this good for you?” he asks, tentative. He's burning up, but he wants Yoongi to enjoy this as much as he does.

Yoongi laughs, voice low. “No matter what you do, this is going to feel good for me. Don't worry.”

He uses Jeongguk's slick to lubricate himself, and then he lines up.
“Jeongguk?”

“Yes?” Jeongguk's chest is rising and falling; he's so needy, but he stills under Yoongi's gaze.

“I love you.” Yoongi pushes in, so slow, almost agonizingly so, but he stretched Jeongguk so well that it's not painful. It feels *wonderful*.

Yoongi bottoms out after a long minute, leaning up to rest his head on Jeongguk's chest. All Jeongguk can do is breathe, in and out. Yoongi's arms drape around him, holding him. Jeongguk can't help himself. He cries again, eyes brimming with soft tears. He's so happy.

They both catch their breath, and then Yoongi starts to move. It's unhurried and sensual, just soft rocking that has Jeongguk whimpering into Yoongi's shoulder. Yoongi groans too, low and guttural, circling his hips so that he grinds right into Jeongguk's prostate.

Eventually they set a rhythm, slow thrusts that have Jeongguk gasping, little moans cracking into gentle whines. It's not rough, but it's intense because they're so close and connected and Jeongguk can see the droplets of sweat forming on Yoongi's forehead.

Yoongi's knot swells against Jeongguk's entrance, but he doesn't force it into Jeongguk's body, still careful, inching it in only as Jeongguk's body opens up to accept it. He's further in than before now, each thrust hitting deeper and farther and Jeongguk is almost overwhelmed.

Yoongi hits Jeongguk's sweet spot again, working his hips into it, and that has Jeongguk finally coming, sobbing and grabbing at the sheets and clenching around Yoongi's length.

Then Yoongi is coming too, whispering Jeongguk's name, his cum flooding into Jeongguk and mixing with all the slick and it's *so right*.

Yoongi doesn't pull out, just rolls then onto their sides so that he can pepper Jeongguk's face with kisses. "You were wonderful, Gguk. Perfect." He rubs Jeongguk's back, and Jeongguk curls into him, burying his face in the juncture of Yoongi's neck and shoulder.

His heat is subsiding—Jeongguk suspects it's short-lived as it's only triggered by a slight mishap with his medication—and he feels boneless, fuzzy. He giggles.

"What's so funny?"

"Us." Jeongguk smiles against Yoongi's shoulder. "We're dumb."

"We are," Yoongi agrees. "Complete idiots."

Morning lights spill across the bedroom from where Yoongi's curtains have shifted aside. Jeongguk sighs, completely content. Then something occurs to him, and he moves his head back so he can look Yoongi in the eye. "You didn't mate me," he says hesitantly. "You... you still want to, right?"

"Of course." Yoongi squeezes his shoulder. "I'm not doing it when you're in heat, though. We need to talk about it first."

“Okay.” Jeongguk nods. He loves how Yoongi is so wise, how he managed to think about the whole situation with a clear head even though it was kind of a mess.

Yoongi is finally going limp inside of him, and he slips out. “I’ll get a towel and something for you to eat, okay?”

Jeongguk hadn't realized he was hungry, but he finds that he is. “Thanks,” he says. He smiles at Yoongi, who's pulling on a pair of boxers.

“I’ll be right back,” Yoongi promises before slipping out the door.

“Want to move in with me?” Yoongi asks. It's a Wednesday afternoon in June. Exams are over, dandelions are in bloom, and the two of them are washing dishes together in Yoongi's apartment, Yoongi rinsing and Jeongguk loading the dishwasher. “You practically live here already.”

“Yes,” Jeongguk says, because he does want to. “When?”

“I'm not working on Friday,” Yoongi suggests. “I could help you

move.”

Everyone had been surprised when the two of them got together. “I thought you were fighting,” was the first thing Jeongguk's mother said when he told her. “You didn't talk for so long. I guess I was wrong.”

Taehyung, who had never even met Yoongi, gushed over the two of them. “You're perfect together,” he cooed, and though embarrassed, Jeongguk agreed.

Perhaps Jeonghyun was the most surprised at the news. “Dang,” he told them. “I'm practically a matchmaker.”

“You had nothing to do with it,” Yoongi huffed.

It wasn't until second semester that they decided to mate, because Jeongguk found that he was getting unwanted attention from a beta in his Precalc class. He'd wanted to anyway, of course, but it felt like the right moment. Jeongguk wanted the whole world to know that Yoongi was his.

Sometimes, like now, Jeongguk still had a hard time believing that Yoongi loved him too. It wasn't perfect, of course—they fought occasionally, had a few major disagreements—but they'd worked through everything together. They were honest with each other; didn't say things they didn't mean or beat around the bush. Jeongguk liked that, liked how he didn't have to fear anything because he knew Yoongi would steady him through thick and thin.

“I'd love to move in Friday,” Jeongguk says. “I'll move in any day you want.”

Yoongi takes Jeongguk in his arms, soap suds and all, and kisses him.

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